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Serving Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona

DESERT WARRIOR

Volume 4, Number 48

www.yuma.usmc.mil

December 8, 2005

Arizona senator visits air station

Lance Cpl. Brian J. Holloran
Combat Correspondent

Arizona Sen. Jon Kyl visited the air station Nov. 30 to speak with Station Commanding Officer Col. Ben D. Hancock and a group of Marines who recently returned from a deployment to Iraq.

Kyl was in southern Arizona attending meetings dealing with border control issues, among other topics.

“Senator Kyl was in the area and wanted an update on border issues that affect training on our ranges,” said Hancock.

Kyl’s visit on station, while brief, gave the senator a better idea of border protection issues.

“The senator expressed a lot of concern over the incursions on the ranges by undocumented aliens and smugglers,” said Hancock, a native of Tempe, Ariz. “The senator has resolved to look into expediting the placement of a border vehicle barricade along



Photo by Pfc. Brian J. Holloran

Arizona Senator Jon Kyl talks to a group of Marines who recently returned from deployment to Iraq at Marine Attack Squadron 311’s hangar here Nov. 30. Kyl discussed with the Marines their experiences overseas.

the Barry M. Goldwater Range to decrease the amount of traffic on the range. The senator also

supported the idea of using better technology and other methods to help secure the border.”

In addition to addressing the border control issue, Kyl wanted to speak to Marines who recently

returned from deployment to Iraq.

“Senator Kyl also wanted to talk to the Marines who have been deployed to Iraq, personally thank them for their service and stress to them the importance of their mission in Iraq,” said Hancock.

“Senator Kyl was on station to express his respect and faith in the recently returned troops,” said Maj. Ossen Dhaiti, executive officer for Marine Attack Squadron 311.

The senator spoke to the Marines about his experiences in the Middle East and how the people of the state of Arizona and the people in Washington, D.C., feel about the war. The senator also asked Marines about their recent return from deployment.

“The senator wanted the Marines to know that, even though some people were against the war, many people still back the war effort and want to see our troops safe and home,” said Dhaiti, a native of Tallahassee, Fla.

“The senator wanted the Ma-

rines to know that they are respected and appreciated by the public and that they are not being taken for granted,” said Dhaiti.

“Listening to the senator talk made it feel that, to me, we earned respect for what we did,” said Lance Cpl. Gilbert Hernandez, VMA-311 avionics technician. “The senator also told us that he was over in Kuwait recently and that made me respect him a little more.”

“Hearing the senator talk about how people in Washington, (D.C.), feel about the war made me feel better about why we are over there,” said Hernandez, a native of Phoenix. “It didn’t change the way I feel about going back in June though. No matter how anybody feels about us in Iraq, I will go back, because I was ordered to and because it’s my job.”

“In the end, the senator said that he was just thankful that he had the opportunity to visit with these Marines and thank them for their service to our country,” said Hancock.

BMC informs residents of avian flu risks

Cpl. Giovanni Lobello
Combat Correspondent

The Branch Medical Clinic is taking measures to raise awareness about the avian influenza virus on station.

The avian flu’s first major outbreak happened late 2003 and early 2004 in eight of Asia’s countries. Lesser outbreaks have been recorded back to 1997.

“The avian flu is also called the bird flu,” said Lt. j.g. Beth Kane, BMC clinical coordinator. “The flu is naturally in the intestines of birds. The virus can be passed to humans by contacting the saliva, nasal secretion and feces of wild animals. The illness also makes domesticated animals sick and can potentially kill them.”

According to the Center for Disease Control Web site, the bird flu virus does not usually infect humans, but more than 100 confirmed cases of human infections have transpired since 1997.

The avian flu virus spreads from one person to

another and transmission has not been observed to continue beyond one person, according to the Web site.

“Saliva is one of the ways the virus transfers from person to person,” said Kane. “An example of that would be sharing a cup with an infected person. This is one of the reasons why the military is worried about the virus; because service members are in such close quarters.”

Most cases of avian influenza infection in humans have resulted from contact with infected poultry -- domesticated chicken, ducks and turkeys

-- or surfaces contaminated with excretions from infected birds.

There is no evidence that properly cooked poultry or eggs can be a source of infection for avian flu viruses, according to the Center for Disease Control Web site.

“I’m really not worried about people getting it from food sold in the store,” said Kane. “The (Food and Drug Administration) in the (United States) is good with inspecting meats.”

See Flu page 4

Food inspector works to ensure station safety

Cpl. Giovanni Lobello
Combat Correspondent

Service members may wonder if the food in the commissary, Burger King and other station facilities are up to par. Thanks to the Army, there is someone on station assigned to ensure station facilities are the best possible.

Army Spec. Chris Garcia, San Diego District Veterinary branch food inspector, is the station’s guarantee for quality produce, dairy and meat products.

The Army provides food inspectors for all the commissaries in the military. The Army is the only branch of service that has this type of military occupational specialty available.

“The civilian community doesn’t have medical food inspectors in their grocery stores,” said Kimberly Soares, station commissary store director. “Those stores also don’t just have Food and Administration and United States Department of Agriculture approved food. That’s what makes the commissaries unique. Everything in the store is inspected. The inspector checks not just food, but also sanitation.

Garcia is the only food inspector at the station. As a food inspector, his main responsibility is the station commissary and its products.

“I conduct inspections on the produce



Photo by Cpl. Giovanni Lobello

Army Spc. Chris Garcia, food inspector, San Diego District Veterinary branch, checks a can of pineapple for rust and the expiration date during his weekly walk through Dec. 5 at Godfather’s Pizza. Garcia also conducts brief checks at the 7-Day Store, Burger King, Subway, the mess hall, Cactus Bowl and the station club.

and dairy,” said Garcia, a native of San Antonio. “I make sure the vendors are keeping up with their contractual requirements. Each Tuesday and Thursday, when deliveries are dropped off, I take three samples from the produce and dairy. I’ll get (for example) an apple, lemon and an orange and inspect them.”

Food inspectors are also responsible

for checking meat products when they come in.

“When meat delivery trucks come in, I also inspect that,” said Garcia. “If an order of meat is supposed to weigh eight pounds, and I notice there is more fat than muscle, then there is a problem. Compa-

See Food page 4



Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert L. Botkin

1 MEF CG visits station for a look at Desert Talon

Lieutenant Gen. John F. Sattler, commanding general of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and native of Monroeville, Penn., is shown a UH-60L Black Hawk helicopter by Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 John Anderson, Army National Guard 224th aviation battalion flight instructor, Black Hawk pilot and native of Fredericksburg, Va., Dec. 1 on the flight line. Sattler visited many units visiting the station for Exercise Desert Talon to meet the commanders and junior Marines participating in the exercise. In addition to units participating in Exercise Desert Talon, Sattler also toured Marine Attack Squadron 513, Marine Air Control Squadron 1 and Marine Wing Support Squadron 371.

OPINION

Why join the Marines anyway?

Lance Cpl. Robert L. Botkin
Combat Correspondent

Part of the No Child Left Behind Act was signed by President George W. Bush in January of 2002. At first, the bill was viewed by most everyone as beneficial, holding schools responsible for their results while providing them with more funding, which is always welcome.

Recently though, the NCLB act has come under fire for one of the stipulations the schools must agree to in order to receive this funding. In order to reap the full benefits of the NCLB act, participating schools must provide information, including addresses and phone numbers, of all of their students to military recruiters in the surrounding area.

These recruiters then use this information to contact the students and gauge their interest in volunteering for military service and pursue qualified applicants.

It seems like a fair trade-off: better funding for schools in exchange for information that will help government employees do their jobs. But many parents are upset, proclaiming loudly that they do not want their children's information given to anyone without their consent.

The NCLB act does take this into consideration, giving parents the option of excluding their children from the list if they request it.

It sounds like the problem would be solved there, but the attention this has drawn to recruiters has given many anti-military or anti-war parents the chance to broaden their attack on recruiters.

Activist groups have lashed out at the military, claiming they target low-income areas, promising a way to a better life while glossing over the inherent risks associated with being a member of the military.

To support these claims, the activists point to statistics show-

ing that the military is indeed composed largely of low-income individuals.

I found this amazing. I was shocked to my very core. Are they meaning to tell me that people who do not have a leg up on life may choose to put themselves at risk in order to better provide for themselves and their family?

It is an amazing concept, and took some time to sink in. Marines that I know may have joined partially because of things like money for college or the promise of three hot meals a day and a place to sleep. Some of them might even be willing to get deployed and be put in harm's way because they might have been in a bad situation at home.

But I knew that the benefits could not be the only reason they joined.

There had to be something else I thought, otherwise why would not they have just broken the law to be thrown in prison, where they would have had food, shelter, and in many of today's prisons, the chance to earn college credits or even a degree in a field where they could get a job once released?

Then I remembered a Marine I had gone to boot camp with. He came from a wealthy family who had an oil fortune and residences in several countries. In boot camp, we talked once about why he had joined the Marine Corps instead of going to college or just living off of his parents.

I could not understand it at the time, having recently dropped out

of college and, because I was in boot camp at the time, hated the situation that I was in.

He spoke of the intangibles he hoped to gain. Pride, honor, discipline, respect -- things that from some of the stories he told about his childhood, he had obviously been lacking. He even told me about how his parents did not agree with his choice to join the Marines, and in the end, did not even show up to graduation.

So that was it. People joined not just for the money and opportunities, but also for self betterment.

But that was not the end. I thought back to my own decision to join the Marine Corps. Sure, I had gone to college and met limited success there, and realized that I badly needed some of the qualities the Marine Corps promised to instill in me, but those problems were nothing that buckling down and finding a job as a skilled laborer could not solve. There was something more, something else that pushed me to enlist.

My cousin joined the Marine Corps midway through college due to a variety of reasons as well. He was music major and is now a musician in the Marine Corps. When he enlisted, I just thought it made sense. He wanted to play music, and the Marine Corps Band was sure to have some very skilled musicians and be a fine place for him to gather experience while doing what he loved.

Then my brother enlisted. This was completely unexpected for not only me, but everyone who

knew him as well. He had been quiet and somewhat bookish in high school, just hanging out with his close circle of friends and not participating in any athletics. Out of all of my siblings, he was the one I least expected to join any branch of the armed forces. I couldn't understand it when he signed up for the delayed entry program, and still didn't understand a year later when he finally shipped out for boot camp.

Then the letters came. He wrote home often, especially looking back on the experience and knowing how tough it can be to write as often as he did. My parents showed them to all of our family's friends, talking about how proud they were of him and what he was doing with his life.

This all caused me to take a step back and look at my own life.

I had slacked my way through high school and failed to properly prepare myself for college. I could continue going to college on loans, but I didn't want that cloud of debt hanging over my head. I wanted to be my own man. I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to be able to look back on my life and say that I accomplished something great -- something that wasn't done just for my own benefit, but something I did for my family and everyone else I knew.

I wanted to be a Marine.

Once the idea got into my head, I couldn't shake it. I drove to the recruiter's office and spoke to the same staff sergeant who had signed up my brother. He started to lay out the normal recruiting speech, and I cut him off, letting him know that I needed no convincing.

That was it. I volunteered. Just like any high school student can make that decision about their future and volunteer to serve, or choose not to. Parents can pressure their children to do any number of things, but once they reach a certain age, their life is just that -- theirs.

StreetTalk

When you joined, what did you hope to achieve during your time in the Corps?



"I wanted to go to places I wouldn't get to go to as a civilian and to lead Marines."
-- **Gunnery Sgt. Richard Lemos, MAWTS-1**

"I just wanted to make something of myself. I wanted to be financially stable and not go from job to job like I had been doing."
-- **Lance Cpl. Michelle McAdams, MAWTS-1**



"I wanted to get some help with my schooling and gain some good life experience."
-- **Lance Cpl. Robert Munsch, MWSS-371**

"When I joined, I wanted to get into the fight, so I came into the Marine Corps because I knew that's where the fight was going to be."
-- **1st Lt. Brian Psolka, HMM-268**



Chapel Call

Finding peace

Lt. Jennifer L. Bixby
Marine Wing Support Squadron 371 Chaplain

Although peace is one of the big themes of the Christmas season, feeling at peace may not be the easiest thing for those of us in the armed services or our families. A story I heard years ago has always helped me to keep my perspective on peace.

An art contest was held with the objective of producing a painting that best represented peace. Amongst the entries were paintings such as one depicting a placid lake, so smooth that the detail of every tree was perfectly mirrored on the surface of the water. Fluffy, white clouds dotted the sky. This was a beautiful image, indeed. Another painting did not seem to portray peace at all. At first sight, you would wonder if it was entered into the wrong art show. There were chunks of bricks flying through the air and bright flashes of fire from a bomb that had hit its target. This was no lovely image. However, in the corner of the painting was a tree limb that supported a little bird's nest. A mother bird snuggled with two little chicks.

Life is so much more like the second painting. Very rarely

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For more information, visit the chapel at Building 1176 or call 269-2086.

are all the circumstances of our lives "smooth as glass."

As a child, I remember what a trauma it was if we ran out of my favorite breakfast cereal. As a teenager, it was difficult to be at peace without the "right" friends, clothes, grades, etc. As an adult, well, you know all the things that can complicate and adult's day, whether you work at home or with the armed forces.

I might have had one or two "perfect" days in my life. Often, life can seem like it is exploding around us.

When considering Christmas, think of peace in terms of the little bird family in the nest. Rather than leaving our happiness, or peacefulness, to the chance of waking up to a "perfect day," go to God to see what can be made of what is. Like a mother bird, God is always there with us in the midst of life's shifting and unpredictable circumstances. God does not get edged out of the picture. Rather, God creates a space for you to connect, through prayer and through reaching out in community.

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The Desert Warrior is published Thursday of each week by Aerotech News and Review, Inc. at no cost to the government. It complies with publication and printing requirements of the Navy and Marine Corps.

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(Right) T. J. Gardner, junior at Yuma High School, attempts to outrun Maj. Benjamin Malmanger, Marine Fighter Training Squadron 401, during a charity football game to help collect toys for the Toys for Tots program Nov. 30 at the Yuma High School football field, located in Yuma, Ariz. The game pitted Yuma High varsity football team starters against volunteer Marines from across the station.

Photos by Lance Cpl. Brian J. Holloran

Children win when Marines face off against Yuma High School Criminals

Lance Cpl. Brian J. Holloran
Combat Correspondent

Station Marines participated in a fundraiser for Toys for Tots by going head-to-head with city football champion Yuma High School in a charity football game Nov. 30 at the Yuma High football field located in Yuma, Ariz.

The competition was held to assist the Marines in collecting new, unwrapped toys to give to children in need.

The game showcased station Marine volunteers against the Criminals' varsity starters in an eight-on-eight flag football game. Admission to the game was a donation of one new, unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots.

Toys for Tots is a non-profit organization that receives dona-

tions of new toys to give to children and monetary donations to help organize fund raisers and draw in more toys for children in need. Toys for Tots collects an average of 47.3 million toys each year, valued at \$243 million.

The charity game brought in eight boxes of toys, each about four feet tall, for Imperial Valley children, said Sgt. Kyle Milette, personnel chief for Marine Fighter Training Squadron 401.

The game was the idea of Milette, a native of Noble, Okla., and was the biggest toy-raising event held this year by station Marines.

"We were all trying to figure out a good way to get donations

for Toys for Tots," said Milette. "Everyone was just kicking around ideas. At my last duty station, we used to play the Army every year to raise the toys, so we just altered the idea for this station. We thought if we played against the city champs, the community would be more willing to attend."

There were an estimated 200 people at the game to cheer on the Marines and the Criminals, said Milette.

the community and the kids," said Zack Limos, senior and center for the Yuma High Criminals. "I also volunteered because of the love of the game."

"I think this was a great idea," said 1st Lt. Ashish Lall, air defense control officer for Marine Air Control Squadron 1. "It's for a great cause and it's a great way to get not only the community involved with Toys for Tots but the air station involved with the community."

The Marines wanted to play the Criminals because they thought playing against a local high school would bring more people from the community out for support, said Milette.

Both the Marine and Criminals teams were made up of volunteers.

"We volunteered to play mainly to help

"The game was great," said T.J. Gardner, junior and cornerback for the Criminals. "It's a great way to help the local kids and a good way to bring the Marines and the community closer together. It was also fun for us. We got to size ourselves up against these guys and see where we stand."

The game kicked off at 6 p.m. with the coin toss, a presentation of the colors and the playing of the national anthem. The action was slow in the first half, with each team only scoring one touchdown.

After halftime, the Marines came out and scored two unanswered touchdowns, both with unsuccessful extra point attempts. The Criminals came back late in the second half to take a one point lead with 45 seconds left in the

game.

"The Marines are pretty good and they are definitely well conditioned," said Gardner.

With 4.5 seconds left in the game, Maj. Gary Golembiski, VMFT-401 assistant operations officer and native of Jersey City, N. J., threw a 40-yard touchdown pass to Lance Cpl. Tony Ellerbe, Marine Corps Property supply clerk and native of Cincinnati, to win the game.

"This was the most exciting football game I was ever a part of," said Lall, a native of Buffalo, N.Y. "The game went down to the very last play."

"This football game was a chance for us to give back to the community," said Milette. "The Marine Corps is the primary poster child for the Toys for Tots program. We wanted to get the local community involved and show them we are here to make a difference."

For more information on the Toys for Tots organization or to donate online, go to <http://www.toysfortots.org>.



Fans from the Yuma community braved the cold Nov. 30 to see Yuma High School take on the Marines in an eight-on-eight flag football game at the Yuma High School football field, located in Yuma Ariz., to raise donations for the Toys for Tots program. Entry to see the game was one new unwrapped toy. The charitable entry fee qualified fans for a halftime raffle of a new Xbox 360. the game was the idea of Sgt. Kyle Milette, personnel chief for Marine Fighter Training Squadron 401, who thought it would be a great way to involve the community in collecting toys for the Toys for Tots program.



(Above) Marine quarterback Maj. Gary Golembiski, Marine Fighter Training Squadron 401 assistant operations officer, stays in the pocket and delivers a pass during a charity football game Nov. 30 at the Yuma High School football field located in Yuma, Ariz. The Marines won the game with a 40-yard pass from Golembiski to Lance Cpl. Tony Ellerbe, Marine Corps Property supply clerk, with 4.5 seconds left in the game.

(Left) Master Sgt. James Hikmat (left), Marine Fighter Training Squadron 401, stands with the rest of the Marine football team for the playing of colors during a Toys for Tots charity football game Nov. 30 at the Yuma High School football field, located in Yuma, Ariz. The game was played against the Yuma High School football team and was used to increase donations to the Toys for Tots program.

Food ... from page 1

nies normally try to rip you off by giving you meat with more fat than muscle.”

After performing inspections and walk throughs, the food inspector then writes a daily report containing all the discrepancies and sends it to his officer-in-charge at the Yuma Proving Ground.

The reports are used by the government to determine whether or not to allow vendors renew their contracts.

Garcia also conducts daily checkups to make sure there are no problems in the commissary.

“I’ll use a quick reference food guide while I conduct the daily walk through,” said Garcia. “The guide names everything to look for during walk throughs. I also check to make sure there are no expired items on the shelf. If there are expired items then it’s taken off the shelf and returned to the vendor. I also look for general maintenance problems inside and outside the commissary.”

Soares added that when people return a product to the commissary because it was spoiled or for whatever reason, the inspector also handles that.

“He will look into what was wrong with the product,” said Soares. “If he can’t figure it out, then he can send it to be tested in a lab.”

The food inspector does a service to every patron who shops at the commissary by assuring the quality of products in the commissary, said Soares.

Garcia also conducts brief checks at the 7-Day Store, Burger King, Subway, Godfather’s Pizza, the mess hall, Cactus Bowl and the station club.

“Some of them I check once a week and the others once a month,” said Garcia. “All I do is check to see if there is any ex-



Photo by Cpl. Giovanni Lobello

Army Spc. Chris Garcia, San Diego District Veterinary branch food inspector, looks through ingredients as a part of his weekly walk through at Burger King Dec. 5. Garcia is the only food inspector at the station.

pired food and glance over everything. If something looks wrong, then I’ll go further and make a suggestion. Normally, they are good about fixing the situation right away without any problems.”

Along with fixing problems that can be found in the station’s facilities, the food inspector also

goes to Yuma Proving Ground and the military installation in El Centro.

The food inspector position is not well known to station personnel, but it’s important for them to know what he does because his job is important, said Soares.

Flu ... from page 1

The virus has several indicators that are common if someone becomes infected by the avian flu.

Common symptoms from the virus include signs of fever, cough, sore throat, eye infections and can be potentially life threatening.

“The virus usually occurs in cycles,” said Kane. “At one time, several people will be reported infected, and then no one will be infected for a while. The only way to find out if you’re infected

is with a blood test.”

There is still no vaccine available to prevent or heal those infected by the avian flu.

“The only thing available to help treat the virus is anti-viral medication,” said Kane. “The Navy has around fifty thousand doses for the (Department of Defense) available in Southeast Asia, because that is where the virus is most common. They are still making more anti-viral medication to have available just in case.”

People in the U.S. shouldn’t be too concerned that there isn’t a vaccine for the virus, said Kane.

“The virus is not common in the U.S.,” she added. “We just want people to be aware about the possibility. There is nothing to be alarmed about now, but that is no reason to ignore it completely. People should still eat healthy and do all the things to make sure they remain in good health.”

Fore information about the avian flu, visit <http://www.cdc.gov>.



Photos by Cpl. Michael Nease

MACS-1 keeps security tight

(Above) Cpl. Brian Logan, Marine Air Control Squadron 1 radar technician, observes the territory over the sights of an M-2 .50 caliber machine gun outside of the gate at the Cannon Air Defense Complex located southeast of the air station Dec. 1. MACS-1 split into two platoons, one providing security and the other testing that security, to prepare for an upcoming deployment to Iraq.



Cpl. Eric Lunson, Marine Air Control Squadron 1 tactical air operations center operator, uses a mirror to inspect the underside of a vehicle before passing it to enter the Cannon Air Defense Complex located southeast of the air station Dec. 1. As part of the squadron’s security training, the Marines treated the complex as a forward operating base and thoroughly inspected persons and vehicles entering the gate.

Advertisements

MACS-1 Marine reenlists mid-freefall



Photo by Pfc. Brian J. Holloran

Master Gunnery Sgt. Richard L. Williams, Marine Air Control Squadron 1 communications/electronics chief, steers his parachute toward the drop zone inside the Cannon Air Defense Complex located southeast of the air station Dec. 1. MACS-1 Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Tim J. Pierson reenlisted Williams inside a Cessna C-206 aircraft before jumping out of the plane and completing the ceremony in mid freefall.

Cpl. Michael Nease
Combat Correspondent

A Marine Air Control Squadron 1 senior staff noncommissioned officer completed his seventh and final reenlistment ceremony in mid freefall Dec. 1 after jumping out of a plane over the Cannon Air Defense Complex.

Master Gunnery Sgt. Richard L. Williams, MACS-1 communications/electronics chief, was reenlisted by MACS-1 Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Tim J. Pierson. The two began the ceremony in a Cessna C-206 at about 13,000 feet above sea level, but waited to say the final words of the oath -- “so help me God” -- while plummeting to earth at about 120 mph.

Their parachutes opened and they slid into the drop zone to a cheering group of squadron Marines.

Williams, for whom sky-diving is a hobby, has 620 jumps under his belt, but for Pierson, it was a new experience. He was in very capable hands though, as he tandem jumped with Chief Warrant Officer Jay Stokes, a retired Army Green Beret and tandem-jump master. Stokes has jumped more than 14,000 times and is a

four-time sky-diving Guinness world record holder.

Pierson was reluctant to do the jump, but is glad he was able to make a moment in a Marine’s career that much more special, he said.

“Would I do this again on my own? Absolutely not,” said Pierson. “Would I have done it on my own? Absolutely not. But it’s a very significant event for (Williams), and for him to ask me to be a part of it is a great honor for me. It’s a chance to show my respect and admiration for the Marine and help ensure that it’s a moment in his career that he’ll remember for the rest of his life.”

Williams joined the Marine Corps in 1979 under an open contract. He assumed he’d be an infantryman, and was surprised when the Corps shipped him to Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., to learn aviation electronics.

In his 26 years of service, he has worked in three of the Corps’ five MACS units, became one of the few master instructors in his military occupational specialty and developed MOS classes for the tactical air operations center maintenance course, which trains all of the Corps’ TAOC

Marines.

Williams wanted his final reenlistment to be special, and thought a good way to do it would be while sky-diving with the CO, especially since the two are from the same hometown -- Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Williams said he joined the Corps for the job and the adventure, not out of any special love for his county, but later found a deep love for Corps and country through the memory of another Marine from Council Bluffs.

When he was 10 years old, in 1968, Williams remembers seeing a picture of Pfc. Michael G. Rindone in the Council Bluffs newspaper. Rindone, a friend of the family, was killed in action while walking point on a search and destroy mission with the “Walking Dead” -- 1st Battalion, 9th Marines -- in Vietnam.

Williams remembers his aunt coming back from Rindone’s funeral and remarking about his white gloves and how she thought he must have been wounded in the hands.

Twenty-eight years later, in 1996, when Williams was a gunnery sergeant, he went home for his son’s high-school graduation and took a walk through the local cemetery to visit the graves of his relatives. While walking,

he happened by chance to look down and see the tombstone of Pfc. Rindone.

“I’m telling you, I was ten years old again instantly,” Williams said. “The first thing that went through my mind -- not only did I see that picture, but I heard my aunt saying ‘the white gloves,’ and I thought, ‘He was a Marine!’”

“As a ten-year-old, it meant nothing, but I was a gunny at the time, and I’ll tell you what. I almost started crying,” he continued. “Right at that time, a light bulb went on in my head and all this stuff that seems like (bull) that you hear, is not -- it’s real. And at that point I fell in love with the Marine Corps -- because of people like him and what Marines like him have done over the years.”

Since then, Williams has developed a close friendship with the Rindone family, and even had a shadow box made in Rindone’s memory. He keeps Rindone’s boot camp picture in his office.

During his final enlistment, Williams is looking forward to deploying with the squadron and taking care of his Marines.

“I’m just looking forward to being around Marines and working with them for the next three or four years,” he said.

Advertisements

AT EASE

Looking for Love



Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert L. Botkin

This 1-year-old terrier mix was rescued by the Humane Society of Yuma, Ariz., and is now looking for a good home. He is calm, friendly and enjoys snuggling and playing. He would do well in a home with children and is mostly house broken. For more information about this terrier, call 782-1621.

The Humane Society of Yuma, Ariz., has dozens of dogs and cats in need of good homes. Cost of adoptions include immunizations, spaying or neutering the animal, a free veterinary checkup and 30 days of pet insurance. The society also needs volunteers to help take care of the animals and improve their quality of life. The Humane Society accepts donations as well. They currently need paper towels and cleaning supplies, bedding, kitty litter, food and monetary donations. For more information about helping the Humane Society of Yuma, call 782-1621.

News to Use

Professional excellence awards

The Navy League is soliciting nominations for its 2006 Professional Excellence Awards. Each year, the Navy League presents awards in recognition of individual achievements in leadership, maritime affairs, scientific progress, engineering excellence, logistics competence and service to community and country. All active duty and reserve Navy and Marine Corps service members are eligible. Coast Guard and civilians are also eligible for some awards. For more information about the awards and submitting nominations, visit http://www.navyleague.org/public_relations/sea_service_awards.php.

CD recall

Sony BMG has recalled about two million music CDs after anti-piracy software embedded on the discs have been found to make computers running Windows products more vulnerable to hackers. The CDs, released under 52 titles, install a program on Windows-based computers that limits the number of copies that can be made, such as is done with MP3 files. There is no danger for those who use the products in DVD or CD players. AAFES and Marine Corps Exchange customers can return the product to the their local exchanges for a full refund or exchange them for the same title. For a list of affected titles and details about the recall, visit the Sony BMG Web site at <http://www.sonybmg.com>.

Post-deployment tips for children

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry has created a fact sheet entitled “Coming Home: Adjustments for the Military Family” in response to the emotional needs of families after deployment as part of the Facts for Families series. The information provides guidelines to show families what they can do for themselves and when they need to seek outside help. The fact sheet is available in English and Spanish at <http://www.aacap.org/publications/facts-fam/89.htm>.

Scholarships, loans

The Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation has scholarships available for the 2006-2007 academic year. To qualify for a scholarship, applicants must be the child of an active duty, reserve, deceased or retired Marine. The children of Navy corpsmen who are serving or have been serving with fleet Marine units are also eligible. Scholarships range from \$500 to \$10,000. For more information on eligibility requirements or how to make donations, visit the MCSF Web site at <http://www.mcsf.org> or call (800) 292-7777. Applications will be available for downloading at the above Web site beginning Jan. 1.

The Military Officers Association of America also has grants and interest-free loans available for service members and children of MOAA members and active duty service members. Applicants must be less than 24 years old to be eligible for up to \$4,000 in interest-free loans. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.MOAA.org/education> or e-mail edassist@MOAA.org.

NMCRS volunteers

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is seeking volunteers. Recent change of duty station moves have significantly impacted the volunteer work force at the air station NMCRS office. NMCRS needs caseworkers, receptionists and thrift shop workers. No experience is necessary. Training will be provided. Paid child care is also available and mileage to and from the office is reimbursed. For more information, call 269-2373 or stop by the NMCRS office in Building 645, room 101.

MCCS
Events**Family Day celebration**

Marine Corps Community Services will host a Family Day Celebration and Carnival Dec. 17 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in front of the 7-Day Store. Rides will include the Mind Winder, ferris wheel, train ride, rock climb, mega slide, jump houses and more. Santa will be on site at the 7-Day Store for photos. For more information, call 269-3140.

Tailgate party

Semper Fit will host a tailgate party Friday from 7-10 p.m. in the parking lot next to the station laundromat. The party will feature a live band, free food, football highlights and cheerleaders. For more information, call 269-6556.

Flagstaff ski trip

Arizona Adventures will host a ski trip to Flagstaff, Ariz., Dec. 16-18. The \$35 fee includes lodging, transportation and lift tickets. Ski rentals not included. Only 15 seats are available. For more information, call 269-2848.

MCCS vehicle auction

Marine Corps Community Services will auction off a 4x4 1996 Jeep Grand Cherokee with a 5.2 liter V-8 engine, Alloy wheels, hitch, Laredo sports utility rims and a premium sound package. Bid boxes are available at the 7-Day Store and library until close of business today. For more information, call 269-2232.

Guys Night Out

The youth center will host a Guy's Night Out Basketball Tournament Friday from 7-10 p.m. at the youth center gym. For more information, call 269-5390/3659.

Babysitting training

The Child Development Center will host the babysitting training course and annual recertification Dec. 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the CDC. Cost is \$25 for the basic training course and \$10 for recertification. Registration must be in by 5:30 p.m. Dec. 16. For more information, call 269-5390/3659.

Marine Corps Community Services' 411 Infoline is available for information on the go. Just dial 269-1411 to receive updated information and contact numbers for MCCS services and events. The line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In Theater

Tonight

7 p.m. Two for the Money (R)

Friday

6 p.m. In Her Shoes (PG-13)

9 p.m. Waiting (R)

Saturday

4 p.m. The Curse of the Were Rabbit (G)

7 p.m. The Fog (PG-13)

Sunday

5 p.m. Waiting (R)

Monday

7 p.m. In Her Shoes (PG-13)

Tuesday

7 p.m. The Fog (PG-13)

Wednesday

7 p.m. The Curse of the Were Rabbit (G)

Movies are subject to change; call 269-2358 or visit <http://www.yuma.usmc-mccs.org.TheaterSchedules.htm>.

Reindeer Round Up run

The City of Yuma recreation division will host the 2005 Reindeer Round Up 5K/10K run and fun walk Saturday beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the West Wetlands Park off First Street. Register at Parks and Recreation, One City Plaza on Giss Parkway and First Avenue, on or before Friday. Entry fee is \$4 or \$6 for on-site registration Saturday from 7:30-8:15 a.m. There are 11 age divisions with separate male and female categories. Runners in each category will compete for first, second and third-place medallions. Walkers in the one-mile and 5K fun walks will receive participation ribbons. For more information, e-mail parksandrecreation@ci.yuma.az.us or visit <http://www.ci.yuma.az.us/parksandrec>.

Toddler Tuesday

The Yuma Arts Center will host a Blue's Clues holiday wishes-themed Toddler Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday. Admission for adults is \$1 accompanied by up to four children. For more information, call 373-5200 or visit <http://www.ci.yuma.az.us/parksandrec>.

Liberty Call

Art center concert

The Yuma Arts Center will host the swing band Glenn Miller Orchestra Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. as part of the Performing Artist Series. Admission is \$15 per person or \$72 for the 6-show series. For more information, call 373-5200 or visit <http://www.ci.yuma.az.us/parksandrec>.

Pet fostering for deployment

A pet care program called “Guardian Angels for Soldier's Pets” is working to assist service members who have nowhere to leave their pets while they are on deployment. The Arizona-based organization provides an alternative to giving pets up for adoption by arranging foster homes for animals all over the United States, and will be expanding to other states in the future. Potential foster pets should be spayed or neutered, up to date on vaccinations and

need a current copy of veterinary records. Foster parents will send photos and updates about pets via e-mail or standard mail while the service member is deployed. Guardian Angels is a non-profit organization that accepts donations to help defray the cost of bonding and insuring foster parents, and to help cover the expense of food and veterinary care. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.guardianangelsforsoldierspets.org>.

NMCRS sidewalk sale

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society will hold their first ever “Biggest Sidewalk Sale Ever” Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Narr Avenue outside Building 645. Every item on display will be on sale for 25 cents, to include some uniform items. For more information about the sale, to volunteer or to make donations, call 269-2373 or stop by the NMCRS office in Building 645, room 101.

Army band holiday show

The Yuma Arts Center will host free performances by the U.S. Army Band Dec. 16 and 17 at 2 p.m. For more information, call 373-5200 or visit <http://www.ci.yuma.az.us/parksandrec>.

Art sale

The Yuma Art Center Museum will host the Yuma Artists Annual 2005 exhibit for viewing and sale throughout the month of December. For more information, contact Yuma Fine Arts at 329-6607 or visit <http://www.yuma.finearts.com>.

Caroling by canoe

The City of Yuma Parks and Recreation Department will host the annual five-mile Christmas caroling canoe trip on the Colorado River Dec. 16 at 6 p.m. The \$12 cost will include hot chocolate, smores and camp fires. For more information, call 580-3542.

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MACS-1 assists October Iraq referendum

1st Lt. Ben Cichon
Marine Air Control Squadron 1

Democracy struck a blow to terrorism Oct. 15 when the Iraqi public held its first Constitutional Referendum. An estimated 15.5 million Iraqis registered to vote from a population of 26 million. It was an exhaustive effort to recruit Iraqi election workers and transport them to various parts of the country to work the polls, but the mission and election were successful. Two Marine Air Control Squadron 1 Marines, Cpl. Jessica R. Hester and Lance Cpl. Kyle L. Moore, were able to directly contribute to the election’s success. It’s sometimes hard to find news stories or articles about the good things happening in

Iraq. Hester and Moore are two such success stories. They directly helped ensure the referendum was successful; an event that marked the first step in making Iraq a democracy. Moore, an air traffic controller from Evansville, Ind., escorted Iraqi volunteer election workers after they were transported to Al Asad Air Base. The volunteers were fingerprinted and their identification was checked against a list of known terrorists and insurgents. Once cleared, they were processed to work in one of the 5,800 polling stations throughout Iraq. “We used some high-tech gear to make sure that these volunteers weren’t bad guys. It was pretty cool,” said Moore. Moore’s primary duty was to ensure that the volunteers were in the right place at the right time. He watched over them during their screening and while they were

on base. After the elections were over, the volunteers returned to Al Asad for out-processing. When they came back, he would physically search them to ensure they weren’t smuggling firearms, explosives or any other illegal material onto the base. Hester, the detachment information systems coordinator and a native of Trinity, Texas, got to do something relatively few Marines in the air wing get to do -- travel outside ‘the wire’ to conduct a ground mission. Hester was part of the Marine task force responsible for conducting physical security at the polling stations. She departed Al Asad Air Base for one of the local villages with a number of Iraqi election workers and fellow Marines. Once at the polling site, Hester’s main focus was physically searching Iraqi women for weapons and explosives before they were allowed into the polling station.

“As a computer technician, it’s unusual for me to get outside the wire,” said Hester. “I usually sit at a desk and don’t get to see how my efforts affect the war campaign. For the election, I felt like I was a part of the action.” Critics are still torn on the effect the referendum will have on Iraq as a whole, but Moore and Hester see it as a good thing. “For most of these people, democracy used to be an impossible dream,” said Moore. “These elections prove that their dreams are coming true.” “It was nice to be a part of a third world country getting on its feet,” said Hester. “Soon it’ll be walking on its own. It might walk slowly, but at least it’ll be walking on its own.” Some say that the Sunnis, an Iraqi minority who had much of the power under

Saddam’s rule, are threatening a civil war because the Iraqi territory division leaves little to no oil wells in Sunni-controlled provinces. They largely boycotted last year’s vote and refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of a U.S. run election. Not surprisingly, few Sunnis were elected last year to draft the constitution. Sunni leaders now acknowledge that boycotting last year’s election was a mistake and demand representation in the forming of the new government. Whatever happens in the future, this referendum was an important step that Hester and Moore are proud to have been a part of. “It’s rare to see the news report on the positive things that happen here in Iraq,” said Hester. “These elections are not only a monumentally positive thing, but they’re also history being made. I feel like I’m a part of that history now.”

Parvovirus, distemper problems for station pets

Lance Cpl. Robert L. Botkin
Combat Correspondent

The station Provost Marshal’s Office is reporting problems in the past few weeks with animals on station contracting diseases they should be vaccinated for. In the past three weeks, three dogs were euthanized due to the parvovirus, a disease that attacks the lining of the digestive system and is especially problematic for puppies, said Michele E. Nixon, the station animal caretaker. The last occurrence of a disease such as parvo or distemper in an animal on station was over two years ago, so the recent outbreak is out of the ordinary, said Capt. Terry Johnson, station Provost Marshal and native of Farmington, Mo. All cats and dogs on station are supposed to be vaccinated for diseases such as parvo, distemper and rabies, but are sometimes over-

looked because of a lack of owner responsibility, said Johnson. Station regulations specifically require all cats and dogs brought aboard the station to be registered with PMO within 14 days of arrival, at which time they will be issued an identification tag that should be worn at all times. This tag is in addition to the Yuma county license and rabies tags which are required by Arizona state law, said Nixon. Parvo and distemper are both highly contagious viruses that are shed through bodily excretions, and is even airborne in the case of distemper. The symptoms of the two diseases are similar, including fever, diarrhea and vomiting, with both ending in death if not caught and treated quickly. Vaccination schedules for dogs include a rabies vaccination at four months of age with a booster shot one year after. After the two initial shots, dogs need another booster shot every three years, said Nixon.

Dogs must also receive a vaccination for distemper, adenovirus, parainfluenza, parvovirus and coronavirus at eight and 12 weeks of age. Dogs are then to receive a booster shot for those diseases plus a vaccination for leptospirosis every year afterward. Cats need a rabies vaccination at four months of age, with a yearly booster. They also need a vaccination for feline rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukemia at eight, 12 and 16 months, with yearly boosters, said Nixon. Vaccinations for pets can be obtained on station at Building 591 by appointment, or civilian veterinarians can be used as long as paperwork is obtained as proof of vaccination, said Johnson. Station residents should also beware of the legal ramifications of keeping an unregistered or unvaccinated pet, as PMO is tasked with enforcing the regulations, said Johnson. Station residents can lose their pet privileges, lose housing privileges and even be

subject to non-judicial punishment if the command desires. Instances of neglect and abuse can also go to civil court. In order to help prevent animals from contracting one of these diseases, or to prevent them from spreading, station residents are encouraged to promptly remove any droppings and disinfect anything a diseased animal may have contacted with a solution of chlorine bleach and water, diluted to one fluid ounce of bleach per quart of water, said Nixon. Even with these tips, the best way to combat parvo and distem-



Photo by Lance Cpl. Robert L. Botkin

Shannon Snyder (left) and Heather Jordan, veterinary assistants at the Foothills Animal Hospital, administer a rabies vaccination to Squirty Dog Dec. 5 at the Foothills Animal Hospital, Yuma, Ariz. Dogs and cats need to start with their vaccinations as early as eight weeks after they’re born in order to insure they are safe from diseases such as distemper and parvovirus. In the past month, there have been three cases of parvo on station due to pet owners failing to properly vaccinate their animals. per and keep your own animals safe is to take pet ownership seriously and become more ac-

tive, said Johnson. If every pet on station were properly vaccinated, there would be no problem.

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Mary Tatton, Semper Fit assistant and Las Vegas native, gathers more chips to add to her pot in the poker room of the Sahara Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas Dec. 3.



Sin City



Angie Marchman, station Single Marine Program coordinator, “pulls some slots” while chatting with some friends at the Sahara Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas Dec. 2. The Las Vegas trip is one of the most popular SMP vacations and is done about once a year through the program. Marchman said traveling to new places and taking advantage of the vacation opportunities provided through the SMP helps break up the monotony of the service members’ routines, which gives them something to look forward to and lets them return to work refreshed.

Photos by Cpl. Michael Nease

SMP gambles on a good time

Cpl. Michael Nease
Combat Correspondent

Seventeen station Marines and sailors traveled to Las Vegas Dec. 2-4 with the Single Marine Program to get away from the daily grind and have some fun in Sin City.

The service members spent two nights at the Sahara Hotel and Casino, which features an 85,000-square-foot Moroccan-themed casino floor, live entertainment and, of course, a buffet restaurant, on the Las Vegas strip within walking distance of the many other casinos and entertainment opportunities.

Las Vegas is an SMP destination that has a high success rate and is always in demand. The trip had 20 spots available to station service members and filled up quickly, though three Marines had to cancel at the last minute due to conflicts with their work schedule because of Exercise Desert Talon, said Angie Marchman, station SMP coordinator.

The program organized transportation to and lodging at the Sahara at an affordable rate for service members, but once everyone checked in, the Marines and sailors had free reign to make their own schedule during the rest of the trip. This freedom was a welcome surprise to many of the service members.

For Cpl. Jeff Moore, a Combat Service Support Company 133 heavy equipment mechanic, Las Vegas was great because he never had to look at his watch, he said.

“You could just forget about the time altogether,” said Moore. “It was good to get away from Yuma and actually party in a real city.”

Many of the seventeen spent their time bouncing from one lavish casino to the next, trying their hands at the slot machines and gambling tables, and attending some of the many shows available such as concerts, comedians and magicians.

SMP’s overall goal is to improve the all-around quality of life for single service members. There are five components the program focuses on, which are community service, career planning, health and wellness, life skills and recreation.

SMP holds meetings twice a month with volunteer representatives from station units to discuss any quality-of-life issues that service members might have, whether it be the condition of the barracks, community-service opportunities or planning a trip to Las Vegas.

Recreation is the most popular of these among the Marines, said Marchman, but is also very important to their quality of life.

Traveling to new places and taking advantage of vacation opportunities helps break up the sometimes monotonous routine of service members, and they back to work refreshed, motivated and with something good to look forward to, Marchman said.

“This was the first SMP trip I’ve been on and I had a real good time,” said Cpl. Chris Kuiken, CSSC-133 maintenance management clerk. “I’ll definitely look into future trips.”

Cpl. Jeff Moore (right), Combat Service Support Company 133 heavy equipment mechanic, and Cpl. Chris Kuiken, CSSC-133 maintenance management clerk, play some quarter slot machines at the Sahara Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas Dec. 3 during a Single Marine Program trip. The slots didn’t turn out as loose as the service members would have liked, but some of the Marines and sailors had good luck on the poker and roulette tables.



Sgt. Erik Estlund (left), Marine Wing Support Squadron 371 construction, checks his cards against the dealer’s at a Three-Fifty-Seven poker table at the Sahara Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas Dec. 3. Three-Fifty-Seven is a three-card poker variation that is played in three rounds where the wild card changes each round.



Mary Tatton, Semper Fit assistant, shows her hole cards to win a hand of Texas Hold’em poker in the poker room of the Sahara Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas Dec. 3. Tatton is a Las Vegas native and helped the Marines and sailors out with some tips during the trip. Some of the perks included with the two-night stay in Vegas were VIP passes to some of the most popular Las Vegas clubs. During the trip, the Marines and sailors on the trip were able to enjoy the hotel’s live entertainment, gambling and buffet restaurant, as well as take in the comedy shows, concerts and magicians available in neighboring casinos.

AROUND THE CORPS

Mixture of Taqaddum Marines make up QRF



Photos by Lance Cpl. Wayne C. Edmiston

Members of the Quick Reaction Force stand in front of their patrol vehicles at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq, Nov. 23. The QRF is part of Headquarters Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 25, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), and is ready at a moment's notice to take on any task assigned.

Lance Cpl. Wayne C. Edmiston
2nd Force Service Support Group

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq -- There is a small group of Marines here that epitomizes the idea that "every Marine is a rifleman." They come from a mixture of jobs, but complete a patchwork that makes Taqaddum's reaction team. They are the members of the Quick Reaction Force of Headquarters and Service

Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 25, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), and they are relied on to augment the day-to-day operations of the regiment.

For one of the fire team leaders, Cpl. Robert D. Lavario, the opportunity to do a variety of tasks is what he enjoys most about being with the force.

"(I enjoy) the fact we get to do different things and we are not just stuck in the same nine-to-five job," the Rounder, Texas, native explained. "One day we

may be doing security patrols, and another, we may be helping the (military policemen)."

The jobs QRF does for the regiment consist of third country national vehicle searches, patrolling the roads for speeders on base as road master, providing security for convoys, providing internal security in billeting areas and various other tasks, said Lavario.

Quick Reaction Force members received training on improvised explosive devices, patrols, crew served weapons

and Military Operations in Urban Terrain, said Lance Cpl. Keith D. Doby, gunner for QRF and Houston native. Doby especially appreciates being a part of QRF because of his history of serving in the infantry.

"I love being the gunner and seeing Iraq," Doby said. "Being an infantryman by trade, I get to get out and do my job more."

Other Marines enjoy being a part of the team simply for all the new things they get to try and the skills they get to perform, being comprised of a variety of military occupational specialties.

"I like getting trained on the larger weapons," said Cpl. Elliot M. Guthrie, a wireman serving as assistant fire team leader for QRF, and Buckley, Wash., native. "I also enjoy getting to do more infantry-like tactics."

"We have Marines that range from field radio operators, maintenance, infantry and all sorts of jobs," Lavario said. "It is what makes us a unique group."

One thing that defines them as a Quick Reaction Force is their ability to be called up at anytime.

"We are available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to respond," said Guthrie. "When we are needed, we are there to complete the mission."

One member whose passion sticks out is Cpl. Scott K. Bachman, field radio operator and Reading, Pa., native.

A reservist with his unit out of Allentown, Pa., he volunteered to go to Iraq

to be able to lead Marines.

"It's a great thing to be out here," said Bachman. "Picking up a young Marine and teaching them is what I do."

Sgt. Brian Dunkin, QRF commander, not only leads the QRF but helps train his Marines.

The native of Fort Wayne, Ind., has a diverse background to include training with the military police. Dunkin is quick to praise and give credit to his Marines.

"We are doing great," said Dunkin. "For coming from a variety of (military occupational specialties), they are picking up things well and getting the job done."



A member of the Quick Reaction Force stands in front of his patrol vehicle at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq, Nov. 23. The QRF responds to calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week in addition to vehicle searches, patrolling base roads for speeders, convoy security, internal security and more.

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SPORTS

Cinderella soccer season ends in tough loss



Mike McKinney (left), station varsity soccer team center midfielder, accelerates by a Curiel defender during the teams' Yuma city soccer league semi-final match-up Saturday at Rancho Viejo Field in Yuma, Ariz. The Marines' Cinderella season ended with a 3-1 loss, but now they will regroup and prepare for next season. However, the key task in the offseason is to find a new coach as Luis Palacios, station team coach, will be retiring.

Lance Cpl. Dustin M. Rawls
Combat Correspondent

The station varsity soccer team's Cinderella season came to a quick halt Saturday when the team suffered a hard-to-swallow 3-1 loss to the number two-seeded Curiel at Rancho Viejo Field in Yuma, Ariz.

Saturday's game was an intense back-and-forth battle dominated by fierce defensive performances by both teams.

Constantine Stewart, station team forward, was able to score one goal in the first half, but in the end, the Marines' defense broke down and controversial calls by the referees added up.

"We had a lot working against us, especially the league," said Mike McKinney, station center midfielder. "We were outsiders in the league, so no close referee calls ever went our way. We still played a fantastic season though.

"During (Saturday's game), we started off playing them pretty even, but then they scored two quick goals on us because our middle broke down," McKinney added.

McKinney was pleased with the effort his team put forth and with the momentum they were able to gain and maintain through the first half.

"We stepped up our play and started getting more physical with them, which allowed us to score a goal on them," McKinney explained. "Going into the second half, we thought we had things going pretty well and that we'd be able to dominate them. We broke down again and weren't able to recover."

Although the Marines' season ended prematurely, most of the players have a positive attitude about the journey they



Photos by Lance Cpl. Dustin M. Rawls

Edgar Carmargo (right), station soccer team forward, races against a Curiel defender to win possession of a loose ball during a Yuma city soccer league semi-final game Saturday at Rancho Viejo Field in Yuma, Ariz.

made with one another, said Luis Palacios, station team coach.

"We were able to beat the number one-seeded team in the tournament in our first playoff game, and we ended up losing to the second place team in the semifinals," explained McKinney. "That's a great accomplishment considering the trials we had to go through during the season."

The station team had other great accomplishments, including a top three finish in the Marine Corps' West Coast Regional Soccer Tournament and entrance into Yuma city league's playoffs, said Palacios.

"This team has proved their determination and will to win time and time again," he explained.

Palacios said the mentality of the team was what made it and the season such a

good one, even with the disappointing ending.

"When you have players with such great passion for the game of soccer, your team's bound to win games," said Palacios. "All the players worked hard and worked together throughout the season. Even though we didn't win the championship, we displayed characteristics of the Corps -- honor, courage and commitment."

Some of the players from this year's team will be leaving before next season, but players always come and go and the station team will continue to progress, said McKinney.

"Players leaving is always a huge obstacle for all Marine Corps teams," he said. "We've lost players in key positions from the goalie to strikers, but we always bounce back."

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